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ORNAMENTAL AND USEFUL ARTICLES OF CHINA FOR DECORATING.

BY ELLEN DREW.



THE numerous articles now offered the amateur to paint are of so varied a character in size, style, price, etc., etc., that it is almost safe to say, "You can get anything you want in undecorated china." Formerly the list comprised such articles only as were in daily use on the table, such as cups and saucers, plates and dishes of many sizes and shapes. By degrees other things were added, some of which were useful, while others were purely ornamental. Then, if there was a demand for any special article, there was an

immediate supply in several sizes and shapes, and as these varied in price it became quite possible not only to obtain any kind of an article a passing fancy would suggest, but at almost any price. The supply is practically without limit, and it would be a vain attempt to give it in detail. Nothing short of an exhaustive catalogue could do it justice. During the Christmas holiday season small single articles, or sets of articles are in great demand by the china painter for gifts, and perhaps a résumé of some of the newest will prove of value and interest to our readers.

There are any quantity of small trifles, of a very inexpensive character, that may be converted into real—aside from the sentimental—value by the quantity and quality of work placed upon them. Under this category may be mentioned the various little trays, the smallest of which is for pins; next in order of size is for hair pins; a long narrow one comes for pens and pencils, a still larger for trinkets, and one nearly square is for the manicure set, one still larger for brush and comb. All over this size may be used *ad libitum* for tête-a-tête sets, individual sets, afternoon tea sets, and so on. Of course, the larger ones are much more expensive than the little ones, for ordinarily the price of china ware is far in excess of and out of proportion to the increase in size. Next to trays, in order of quantity and variety, is, perhaps, the innumerable boxes. These are for matches, stamps, bon-bons, pins, puffs, powder, pomade, sardines, cards, jewels, gloves, handkerchiefs and even collars and cuffs—in fact, their name is legion. Like the trays, these come in every conceivable size and shape—round, square, oval, oblong, irregular and three-cornered.

The next in china small wares, numerically speaking, comes the basket. These afford wide scope for decoration, and are useful in many ways. They are used variously for bon-bons, sugar, spoons, salted nuts, flowers, fruit, etc. The larger ones are frequently used to hold photographs. Some of these have handles and some have not. These handles are in some instances thrown across the basket, sometimes at one side, and one of the very latest of these has no less than three handles.

Many charming little trifles suitable to adorn the five o'clock tea table are always in evidence, but in addition to these half ornamental, half utilitarian objects, quite a number of articles are made exclusively for this purpose. There is a

small, flat dish with a depression on one side to hold the cup, which is convenient, as it answers the place of both cup and saucer and plate, and may be held in one hand. There are tiny sugar and creams to match; the cosy tête-a-tête set and the individual tea set. Jars of various description to contain crackers or biscuits, marmalade, condensed milk, etc., etc. Tea caddies are absolutely indispensable, and the crumb tray and call bell are the latest additions.

Some of other single pieces are thimbles, napkin-rings, photograph-frames—these to hold one, two or even three pictures—whisk-holders, match-safes, candlesticks, both low and tall, a hanging rack for tooth-brushes, and the newest thing out is a globe for the shade of a lamp or gas. This will not obscure the light too much, but will transmit a soft glow that is charming.



WASH BASIN WITH SUSPENDED WATER JUG IN FAIENCE.
DESIGNED BY L. CARRIER-BELLEUSE.

Vases, jardinières, ferneries and hanging pots for flowers, tea, coffee and chocolate pots, lamps, clocks, punch-bowls, and table tops are among the more pretentious pieces, and in themselves even undecorated represent an investment of anywhere from four or five dollars to forty or fifty. To decorate these handsomely requires considerable skill, as well as money and time. And this is in proportion to their size and possibilities of decorations.

Large pieces take a great deal of gold, which is always expensive, and the firing costs much more, so that in the end such articles represent a commercial value not to be ignored in estimating the cost. If, in addition, they possess real artistic merit in the decoration it is in the end a good, judicious investment.

In addition to these numerous single articles, there are sets

of things that, if complete, form a very attractive group. These sets are all combinations of useful articles, and, if purchased to match and decorated accordingly, are quite showy and may be very elaborate. Take, for instance, the "library" or "desk set," wherein a wide margin exists for selection. While the inkstand, the four corners (for the blotter), a penholder and a penrack or pencil-tray would form a set, comprising, as it does, all the really useful and necessary articles, this may be added to by a dozen more elegant little trifles. There is the paper-weight, a solid, heavy, flat piece of china, with a handle or knob rising from the middle of the top surface. Matching this is the small blotter. There is also a paper-rack with the usual three apartments and a stamp-box, also with three separate divisions. A sponge-cup is one of the newest additions, and so is the perpetual calendar. A mucilage-pot is quite a necessary appurtenance to many, and others, again, would deem a thermometer of some value. Tall candle-sticks find a resting-place on the library writing-table, and a tiny one for a taper to melt sealing-wax is also convenient for those who use a seal. Handles come to be attached to paper-cutters, and finally the bell is frequently added to this array. Some have also even added one of the small china boxes to hold pens. All of these different articles, while not actually necessary to complete a set, are of the usually adopted style of desk furniture, and a selection may be made as best suits one's requirements, and perhaps nothing will be missed, even if half of them are omitted.

A toilet or boudoir set is another that admits of great elasticity in selection, and one may procure as many as one needs. In addition to the brush and comb tray and manicure-tray already mentioned, there are the backs for both hair and clothes brushes, a hand-mirror and one for a comb also. Included also in this set are some two or three of the various jars, pots and boxes, a ring-stand or tree, and the handle for the shoe-buttoner. In the selection of these sets one can make them as elaborate as one wants.

Another set comprises a punch-bowl on a revolving stand, a large tray, one capable of holding the punch-bowl and a dozen punch cups.

For the gentlemen there is, of course, the inevitable smoking set, the several articles being a tray, a covered jar for smoking tobacco, a smaller one, without cover, for segars, and a still smaller one for cigarettes, a box for matches and a small tray or dish for ashes and burnt matches. To

this assortment may be added a candlestick, and this is frequently done.

From this vast supply, to which manufacturers are constantly adding, the amateur china decorator need never be at a loss to supply herself or her friends—the latter not always being an unmixed blessing. A friend of mine, a literary woman, had been for many years the recipient of small articles for her desk on all occasions when a gift was possible. Being a popular woman, these were frequent and every pretext for a "remembrance" or a "souvenir" usually took this shape. These were repeated in various materials—wood, glass, brass, and finally in silver. When she heard from me that they were all made in porcelain, she exclaimed with considerable dismay and anxiety in her voice, "I suppose I shall have to have them all over again now in china!"

DECORATIVE NOTE.

A UNIQUE piece of furniture is the dressing-table belonging to the Duchess of York, which is made in Staffordshire porcelain. It is modeled in a shell-work design; the latter is lighted up by electricity, so that the rays reflecting the colors and tones of the porcelain spread all around a soft glimmer of exquisite effect. On the fringe of the table are the words "Marriage of the Roses," and the shell work is decorated with shamrocks, roses, and thistles in raised gold. Eloquent in its poetic expression is, among others similarly conveyed, the idea given by the painting on the left-hand cupboard of the dressing-table. An old gold rose with golden stem, and golden leaves and petals, represents the archbishop in the act of blessing the royal pair, who, symbolized by a



SERVICE IN LIMOGES PORCELAIN. BY HAVILAND. FROM LA REVUE DES-ARTS DECORATIFS.

white rose and a red one, are standing before the altar. In their wake is a train of four pink roses adorned with veils of maidenhair ferns; these are the bridesmaids. Another poetical thought lies in the frame of the mirror, which is ornamented with shamrocks and thistles without the rose. The artist's mind has conceived the idea that the English rose will be present only when the Duchess of York looks into the glass. In another splendid suite, which illustrates the poem of "Launcelot and Elaine," the treatment of the modeling and of the coloring is an indisputable proof of the great advancement in art made in England. The same praises might be sung of other equally lovely pieces, among which are the "Hamlet" sideboard with its rich decoration of palm leaves, and the "Faust" suite.